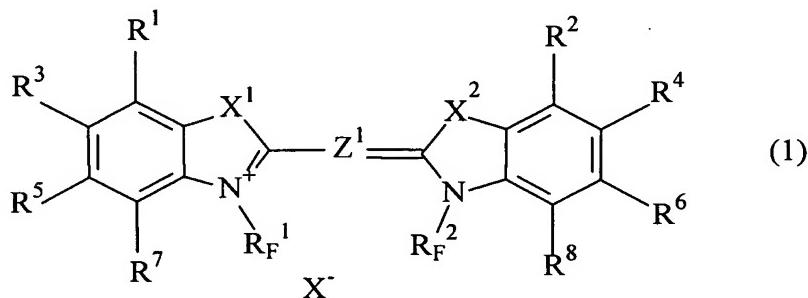


LISTING OF THE CLAIMS:

Claims 1-23 (Canceled)

Claim 24 (Currently Amended): An infrared absorber comprising, in a molecule thereof, a fluorine-containing substituent which have has at least 5 fluorine atoms.

Claim 25 (Currently Amended): An infrared absorber according to claim 24, wherein said infrared absorber is represented by general formula (1) as follows:



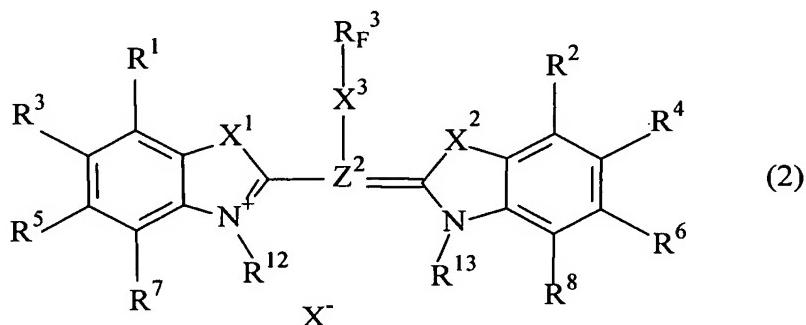
in which formula: each of R_F^1 and R_F^2 independently represents a fluorine-containing substituent having at least 5 fluorine atoms; each of X^1 and X^2 independently represents $-CR^9R^{10}-$, $-S-$, $-Se-$, $-NR^{11}-$, $-CH=CH-$ or $-O-$; R^1 to R^8 each independently represents a hydrogen atom, alkyl group, alkoxy group or halogen atom; R^1 to R^8 may represent a plurality of atoms such that at least one of pairs R^1 and R^3 , R^2 and R^4 , R^5 and R^7 , R^6 and R^8 , R^1 and X^1 , and R^2 and X^2 can be mutually connectable to form an aliphatic 5-membered ring or 6-membered ring, an aromatic 6-membered ring or a substituted aromatic 6-membered ring;

R^9 and R^{10} each independently represents an alkyl group, or represent $=CH-$ which are combined to form a ring; R^{11} represents an alkyl group;

Z^1 represents a heptamethine group, which may have one or more substituents selected from alkyl groups, halogen atoms, amino groups, arylthio groups, alkylthio groups, aryloxy groups, alkoxy groups, barbituric groups and thiebarbituric thiobarbituric groups, and which may include a cyclohexene or cyclopentene ring formed by mutually bonding substituents on two methine carbons of the heptamethine group, which ring may further have a substituent selected from alkyl groups and halogen atoms; and

X^- represents a counter ion required for neutralizing an electric charge.

Claim 26 (Currently Amended): An infrared absorber according to claim 24, wherein said infrared absorber is represented by general formula (2) as follows:



in which formula: R_F^{3} represents a fluorine-containing substituent having at least 5 fluorine atoms; X^3 represents -NH-, -O- or -S-; each of R^{12} and R^{13} independently represents an alkyl group;

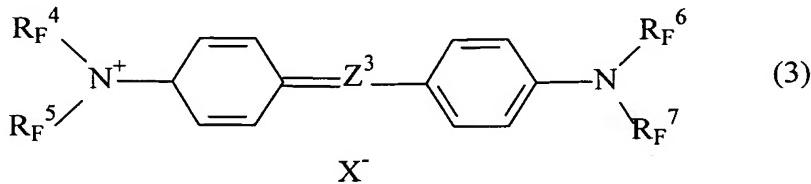
each of X^1 and X^2 independently represents $-CR^9R^{10}-$, -S-, -Se-, $-NR^{11}-$, $-CH=CH-$ or -O-; R^1 to R^8 each independently represents a hydrogen atom, alkyl group, alkoxy group or halogen atom; R^1 to R^8 may represent a plurality of atoms such that at least one of pairs R^1 and R^3 , R^2 and R^4 , R^5 and R^7 , R^6 and R^8 , R^1 and X^1 , and R^2 and X^2 can be mutually connectable to form an aliphatic 5-membered ring or 6-membered ring, an aromatic 6-membered ring or a substituted aromatic 6-membered ring;

R^9 and R^{10} each independently represents an alkyl group, or represent =CH- which are combined to form a ring; R^{11} represents an alkyl group; and

X^- represents a counter ion required for neutralizing an electric charge; and

Z^2 represents a polymethine chain of at least 5 carbon atoms.

Claim 27 (Currently Amended): An infrared absorber according to claim 24, wherein said infrared absorber is represented by general formula (3) as follows:

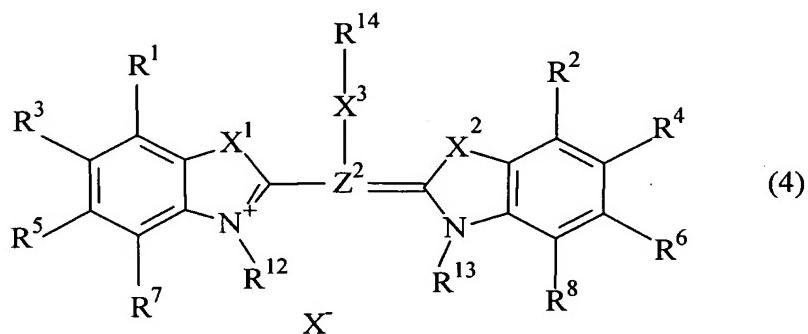


in which formula: each of R_F^4 , R_F^5 , R_F^6 and R_F^7 independently represents a fluorine-containing substituent having at least 5 fluorine atoms or an alkyl group, and at least one of R_F^4 , R_F^5 , R_F^6 and R_F^7 represents a fluorine-containing substituent having at least 5 fluorine atoms; Z^3 represents a pentamethine group, which may have a substituent selected from halogen atoms, hydroxyl groups, alkyl groups possibly optionally having a further substituent, aryl groups possibly optionally having a further substituent and heterocyclic groups, and which may also contain a cyclohexene or cyclopentene ring formed by mutually bonding substituents on two methine carbons of the pentamethine group, which ring may further have a substituent selected from alkyl groups and halogen atoms; and

X^- represents a counter ion required for neutralizing an electric charge.

Claim 28 (Original): An infrared absorber comprising a polymethine chain of at least 5 carbon atoms and an alkyl group of at least 8 carbon atoms, said alkyl group being connected to the polymethine chain via any of nitrogen, oxygen and sulfur.

Claim 29 (Currently Amended): An infrared absorber according to claim 28 wherein said infrared absorber is represented by general formula (4) as follows:



in which formula: R¹⁴ represents an alkyl group of at least 8 carbon atoms; X³ represents -NH-, -O- or -S-; Each each of R¹² and R¹³ independently represents an alkyl group; each of X¹ and X² independently represents -CR⁹R¹⁰-, -S-, -Se-, -NR¹¹-, -CH=CH- or -O-; R¹ to R⁸ each independently represents a hydrogen atom, alkyl group, alkoxy group or halogen atom; R¹ to R⁸ may represent a plurality of atoms such that at least one of pairs R¹ and R³, R² and R⁴, R⁵ and R⁷, R⁶ and R⁸, R¹ and X¹, and R² and X² can be mutually connectable to form an aliphatic 5-membered ring or 6-membered ring, an aromatic 6-membered ring or a substituted aromatic 6-membered ring;

R⁹ and R¹⁰ each independently represents an alkyl group, or represent =CH- which are combined to form a ring; R¹¹ represents an alkyl group; and

X⁻ represents a counter ion required for neutralizing an electric charge; and

Z² represents a polymethine chain of at least 5 carbon atoms.

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Claim 30 (Canceled)